REMARKS

Claims 1-53 are pending. Claim 53 is added by this amendment and does not include new subject matter. New claim 53 is readable on Group II. New claim 53 is generic to the alleged species included in Group I. Thus, the examiner is respectfully requested to examine the claims associated with Group I.

Even without the addition of generic claim 53, applicants respectfully submit that the subject matter of Group I, species 1-5, and Group II are sufficiently related that a thorough search and examination of any one Group would necessarily encompass the search and examination of the remaining Group. Applicants fail to understand how features in Group I, species 1-5, would have any different classification than features in Groups II, or involve any significantly different searching terms or techniques.

In fact, applicants respectfully submit that the search and examination of the entire application can be conducted without serious burden, and that the criteria for a proper requirement for restriction between patentably distinct inventions has not been met. Indeed, MPEP § 803 clearly states that "[i]f the search and examination of the entire application can be made without serious burden, the examiner <u>must</u> examine it on its merits, even though it includes claims to distinct or independent inventions" (emphasis added). Applicants submit that this policy should apply in the present application in order to avoid unnecessary delay and expense to applicants and duplicative examination by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Applicants respectfully submit that the restriction requirement fails to satisfy the criteria of MPEP §803 and is improper.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the restriction requirement are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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